

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) A method for classifying defects comprising the steps of:

imaging an object by illuminating and scanning an electron beam and detecting with detectors;

extracting images of a defect candidate from images obtained from said detectors and calculating defect information of said defect candidate, said calculated defect information including defect surface shape information, pattern defect information and voltage contrast defect information;

classifying said extracted defect candidate image into at least one defect type based on a visual appearance of the defect candidate by using a tabular form classification rule in which each class is defined by a combination of said calculated defect information;

evaluating criticality of defect of said defect candidate image that has been classified into said at least one defect type based on the visual appearance of the defect candidate; and

displaying on a screen said extracted plural defect candidate images in one of a plurality of areas divided by the defect type together with their first and second defect category information each having different standards, said first defect category information relating to said classification of defect type based on the visual appearance of the defect candidate, and said second defect category information relating to said evaluation of said criticality of defect.

7. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 6 wherein said imaging of said object is performed by illuminating and scanning an

electron beam focused on said object and detecting, in synchronization with said scanning, secondary electrons generated from said object by said illumination.

8. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 6 wherein in the step of classifying, said defect types for classification include one or more of the following: particle defects, flaw defects, circuit pattern short defects, and circuit pattern open defects.

9. (Currently amended) A method for classifying defects comprising the steps of:

imaging an object by illuminating and scanning an electron beam and detecting with detectors;

extracting defect candidates from images obtained by said detectors and calculating defect information of said defect candidate including defect surface shape information, pattern defect information and voltage contrast defect information;

classifying said extracted defect candidate images into a first category relating to defect types based on a visual appearance of the defect candidate by using a tabular form classification rule in which each class is defined by a combination of said calculated defect information;

classifying said extracted defect candidate images into a second category relating to defect criticality, said second category relating to a predicted yield from said inspected object; and

displaying on a single screen a distribution on said inspected object of said defect candidates classified in said first category in a map format together with defect candidate images of the first category and/or second category together with their classified information regarding the first category based on the visual appearance of the defect candidate and the second category relating to defect criticality.

10. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 9 wherein said imaging of said object is performed by illuminating and scanning an

electron beam focused on said object and detecting, in synchronization with said scanning, secondary electrons generated from said object by said illumination.

11-23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 7 further comprising forming an image based on said secondary electrons generated from said inspected object by said illumination.

25. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 10 further comprising forming an image based on said secondary electrons generated from said inspected object by said illumination.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) The method for classifying defects as described in claim 9 wherein said defect type includes particle defects, flaw defects, circuit pattern defects, and voltage contrast defects.

28-32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said calculated defect information including defect surface shape information, pattern defect information and voltage contrast defect information.